

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00085 151253Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7528

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS DUBLIN 0085

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO WILSON/REES ON NORTHERN IRELAND

1. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION IN DUBLIN AS YET TO THE WILSON/REES SPEECHES AND ACTIONS OF JANUARY 11 ON NORTHERN IRELAND. THE "NO COMMENT" ATTITUDE HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY TAKEN SO THAT "NOTHING SAID IN THE SOUTH WILL INFLAME A DELEGATE AND DANGEROUS SITUATION," ACCORDING TO A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN.

2. OF THE THREE DUBLIN PAPERS, THE IRISH TIMES GIVES A CAUTIOUS ACCOLADE TO REES' PROPOSALS; THE IRISH INDEPENDENT DOES NOT COMMIT ITSELF, SAYING THAT "IT IS NOT A VERY PRODUCTIVE ANNOUNCEMENT" BUT URGING ALL PARTIES TO GIVE IT A CHANCE TO WORK; AND THE IRISH PRESS ANGRILY ATTACKS WHAT IT CALLS "WILSON'S GAFF" IN SAYING THAT THE SOUTHERN IRISH DO NOT WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE NORTH. "THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFTEN SHOWN THAT KIND OF INDIFFERENCE, BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE WITH THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE," STATES THE PRESS EDITORIAL.

3. OUR SOUNDINGS SO FAR INDICATE A WEARIED RESIGNATION WITH THE LATEST BRITISH PROPOSALS, A FAINT HOPE BUT WITHOUT MUCH CONFIDENCE THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT IMPROVE. DESPITE THE IRISH PRESS WE HAVE NOT DETECTED MUCH RANCOR OVER WILSON'S RATHER BLUNT REJECTION OF IRISH UNITY - EXCEPT AT THE MILLENIUM. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT WILSON'S STATEMENT WILL COME UNDER

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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00085 151253Z

MORE FIRE WHEN THE IRISH HAVE TIME TO DIGEST IT.

CURLEY

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